

Epilogue

A long time after the war ended, the *USS Bear*, having been decommissioned, was being towed from Boston harbor to Virginia where she would find a resting place as a museum in honor of Admiral Richard E. Byrd. During the towing exercise, a severe storm arose at sea and the tow line snapped! The *Bear* plunged into a watery grave in the Atlantic Ocean. It was discovered some time later that sailors preparing the ship for sailing forgot to provide the ship with ballast, which is needed to float any empty vessel. Guess I will never forget the empty feeling I experienced when I read of her "death." What a waste through someone's carelessness!! She had been a good home for two years when I was just "cutting my teeth" as a young sailor and radio communicator. One former member of the *Bear* stated that he had also experienced the same empty feeling when he read the same account in the newspaper. Strange! A ship becomes a part of an individual's life when it is "home" for a long period of time.



One of the things I have done recently is to write letters to various magazines; such as, *The Retired Officers* and *Retired Government Employees Magazines*. I indicated in the article that I would like to hear from someone who was on the *USS Bear* or who had been on the Antarctic Expedition, 1939-41. I am hoping that I will hear from someone in relation to a reunion. As a result from my inquiries, I have received correspondence from Clay Bailey, radioman. Just recently, someone from the National Academy of Scientists said that Ruth Siple, who is the widow of Dr. Paul Siple, leader at the West Base, would be a good source to begin inquiries. I contacted her by mail. Mrs. Siple said she had not heard of a reunion for Little America III. She had been responsible for reunions for Little America I & II.

I am still hoping!

Another interesting note. According to recent reports on *Polar Exploration* published in Washington, D.C., Little America III is no longer intact at the South Pole as the ice shelf on which it was located broke off and became ice packs; thereby melting away or floating out to sea.

GLOSSARY

antenna	a conductor by which electromagnetic waves are transmitted or received
ballast	any heavy material carried in a ship or vehicle to provide stability
coal burner	a ship that burns coal for power
crossarms	end of a yard, a long spar, tapering toward the ends to support and extend a square lateen or lug sail — these cross. A lateen sail is a triangular sail, extended by a long yard, slung to mast which is usually low
hull	the frame or body of a vessel, exclusive of masts, yards, sails and rigging
jockeyed	to manage with skill
kilocycle	now known as kilohertz. A unit of frequency equal to 1000 cycles per second
knot	a unit of speed equal to one nautical mile or about 1.15 statute miles per hour
mast	a spar or structure rising above the hull and upper portions of a vessel to hold sails, rigging, etc. Any upright pole
lighter	a barge used in loading and unloading ships or transporting goods for short distances
polliwog	tadpole
port	left-hand side of a vessel facing forward
prow	the bow of a vessel; stem
RADAR	radio detecting and ranging
receiver	a device that receives electrical signals or waves and changes them into sound or pictures
scow	a large boat with square lines and a flat bottom
shellback	an old sailor; an old salt
starboard	the right-hand side of a vessel facing forward
striker	apprentice to a cook or other ratings. In the U.S. Navy, a nonrated enlisted man who is working for a petty officer's rating
transmitter	a device for transmitting signals, as in radio
U-boat	a German submarine G.U-Boot, short for unterseeboot, undersea boat
wheelhouse	nautical for pilothouse
yard	a long spar, tapering toward the ends, to support and extend a square, lateen or big sail
yeoman	a petty officer having chiefly clerical duties

Tribute to JAD

He joined the Navy, this handsome youth
With his gentle swagger and head aloof.
He served his country far and near,
As patriotic as Paul Revere.
He sailed on ships; in planes he flew,
Exploring with Byrd, this young recruit.
He fought for his country and served it with pride
Praying to God while risking his life.
These words of tribute are small as compared —
To the dangers and trials he faced and beared.
So, here's to you, Daigle, in your Navy blue,
Thanks for being there when we needed you.

— CLK

About the Author

Lt. Joseph Austin Daigle was born in China, Texas, April 3, 1918, and was reared in a traditional French environment where the language customs and music still prevail. He graduated in 1935 from China High School and then attended Chenier's Business and Radio College in Beaumont, Texas. After completing studies in communications, he obtained a commercial radio license. Lt. Daigle then enlisted in the U.S. Navy, receiving his training at Naval Air Station, Coronado Island, San Diego, California, attaining the rating of 3/C RM.

Lt. Daigle was then selected to sail with Admiral Richard E. Byrd as radioman on the *USS Bear* and its subsequent mission to establish a base at Little America in the Antarctic (1939-1941). During the course of this assignment, he advanced to 2/C RM and two years later to 1/C RM. Upon returning to the states, he did a short duty in Greenland and then attended radio school in Anacosta, Washington, D.C.

Lt. Daigle's assignments took him to NAS, Seattle, Washington, where he became part of an aircraft squadron based onboard the *USS Altimaha* in charge of the radio section. He sailed to Noumea, New Caledonia, and in 1943 flew to Guadalcanal due to the squadron separating from the *USS Altimaha*. After returning to the states, he transferred to the Carrier Aircraft Service Unit heading for the Marshall Islands. At Kwajaleen Atoll they established a service unit for B24's. The unit then relocated on Parry Island to establish a seaplane anchorage to service PBM aircraft. At this point of his career, Lt. Daigle received the rating of Ensign.

In 1945, the unit returned to NAS, Sand Point, Seattle, Washington. In July, 1946, he transferred to NATT Corpus Christi, Texas, to study advanced electronics. After completion of these courses he relocated at Alameda Naval Air Station, California, as instructor and supply officer for NAETU, and received the rating of Lieutenant, Junior Grade. Lt. Daigle was assigned duty in Philadelphia as Officer-in-Charge of Aviation Electronic Procurement Branch.

The Korean War began in 1950, and his duties took him to Sasebo, Japan, as Assistant Communications Officer. He then advanced to Lieutenant, Senior Grade.

In 1952, he left Japan and transferred to *USS Joseph P. Kennedy* (DD850) as Operations Officer, holding maneuvers with the Allied Navies. A year later, he became Executive Officer on the *USS Woodsen* (DE309).

At the end of this assignment he went to Navy Line School, Monterey, California, to indoctrinate newly appointed naval officers. Then on to Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts, to major in Political Science. His next assignment was to Kitter, Maine, where he was appointed Base Communications Officer.

Lieutenant Joseph Austin Daigle retired from military service on May 1, 1958, after serving 20 years, one month and two days. He says, "It was a good career, but it had some rough spots — two wars! The Navy was good to me and I am privileged to have served my country in all capacities."



Lt. Joseph Austin Daigle, USN (Ret)
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